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THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF AMERICAN FARMERS¹

The title of this paper indicates that, for the present purpose, the words "the rural community" have been interpreted to apply chiefly to farmers. Eight millions of our people are classed by the census as "semi-urban." The village problem is an interesting and important field for social investigation, but we shall discuss only the conditions and needs of farmers.

In America the farm problem has not been adequately studied. So stupendous has been the development of our manufacturing industries, so marvelous the growth of our urban population, so pressing the questions raised by modern city life, that the social and economic interests of the American farmer have, as a rule, received minor consideration. We are impressed with the rise of cities like Chicago, forgetting for the moment that half of the American people still live under rural conditions. We are perplexed by the labor wars that are waged about us, for the time unmindful that one-third of the workers of this country make their living immediately from the soil. We are astounded, and perhaps alarmed, at the great centralization of capital, possibly not realizing that the capital invested in agriculture in the United States nearly equals the combined capital invested in the manufacturing and railway industries. But if we pause to consider the scope and nature of the economic and social interests involved, we cannot avoid the conclusion that the farm problem is worthy of serious thought from students of our national welfare.

We are aware that agriculture does not hold the same relative rank among our industries that it did in former years, and that our city population has increased far more rapidly than has our rural population. We do not ignore the fact that urban industries are developing more rapidly than is agriculture, nor deny the seriousness of the actual depletion of rural population, and even of community decadence, in some portions of the Union. But

¹ Read at the Congress of Arts and Science, St. Louis, before the section of "The Rural Community."

these facts merely add to the importance of the farm question. And it should not be forgotten that there has been a large and constant growth both of our agricultural wealth and of our rural population. During the last half-century there was a gain of 500 per cent. in the value of farm property, while the non-urban population increased 250 per cent. Agriculture has been one of the chief elements of America's industrial greatness, it is still our dominant economic interest, and it will long remain at least a leading industry. The people of the farm have furnished a sturdy citizenship and have been the primary source of much of our best leadership in political, business, and professional life. For an indefinite future, a large proportion of the American people will continue to live in a rural environment.

In a thorough discussion of the "social problems of American farmers" it would be desirable first of all to analyze with some detail the general question which we have called the farm problem. Only thus can we understand the social difficulties of the rural community, the significance of the social agencies designed to meet those difficulties, and the real ambitions and needs of the farming class. But time will permit merely a concise, and necessarily a somewhat dogmatic, statement of what the writer believes to be the ultimate farm problem in America. We may perhaps most quickly arrive at the conclusion by the process of elimination.

Current agricultural discussion would lead us to think that the farm problem is largely one of technique. The possibilities of the agricultural industry, in the light of applied science, emphasize the need of the farmer for more complete knowledge of soil and plant and animal, and for increased proficiency in utilizing this knowledge to secure greater production at less cost. This is a fundamental need. It lies at the basis of success in farming. But it is not the farm problem.

Business skill must be added, business methods enforced. The farmer must be not only a more skilful produce-grower, but also a keener produce-seller. But the moment we enter the realm of the market we step outside the individualistic aspect of the problem as embodied in the current doctrine of technical agricultural

teaching, and are forced to consider the social aspect as emphasized, first of all, in the economic category of price. Here we find many factors—transportation cost, general market conditions at home and abroad, the status of other industries, and even legislative activities. The farm problem becomes an industrial question, not merely one of technical and business skill. Moreover, the problem is one of a successful industry as a whole, not merely the personal successes of even a respectable number of individual farmers. The farming class must progress as a unit.

But have we yet reached the heart of the question? Is the farm problem one of technique, plus business skill, plus these broad economic considerations? Is it not perfectly possible that agriculture as an industry may remain in a fairly satisfactory condition, and yet the farming class fail to maintain its status in the general social order? Is it not, for instance, quite within the bounds of probability to imagine a good degree of economic strength in the agricultural industry existing side by side with either a peasant régime or a landlord-and-tenant system? Yet would we expect from either system the same social fruitage that has been harvested from our American yeomanry?

We conclude, then, that the farm problem consists in maintaining upon our farms a class of people who have succeeded in procuring for themselves the highest possible class status, not only in the industrial, but in the political and the social order—a relative status, moreover, that is measured by the demands of American ideals. The farm problem thus connects itself with the whole question of democratic civilization. This is not mere platitude. For we cannot properly judge the significance and the relation of the different industrial activities of our farmers, and especially the value of the various social agencies for rural betterment, except by the standard of class status. It is here that we seem to find the only satisfactory philosophy of rural progress.

We would not for a moment discredit the fundamental importance of movements that have for their purpose the improved technical skill of our farmers, better business management of the farm, and wiser study and control of market conditions. Indeed, we would call attention to the fact that social institutions are

absolutely necessary means of securing these essential factors of industrial success. In the solution of the farm problem we must deliberately invoke the influence of quickened means of communication, of co-operation among farmers, of various means of education, and possibly even of religious institutions, to stimulate and direct industrial activity. What needs present emphasis is the fact that there is a definite, real, social end to be held in view as the goal of rural endeavor. The highest possible social status for the farming class is that end.

We may now, as briefly as possible, describe some of the difficulties that lie in the path of the farmers in their ambition to attain greater class efficiency and larger class influence, and some of the means at hand for minimizing the difficulties. A complete discussion of the farm problem should, of course, include thorough consideration of the technical, the business, and the economic questions implied by the struggle for industrial success; for industrial success is prerequisite to the achievement of the greatest social power of the farming class. But we shall consider only the social aspects of the problem.

RURAL ISOLATION

Perhaps the one great underlying social difficulty among American farmers is their comparatively isolated mode of life. The farmer's family is isolated from other families. A small city of perhaps twenty thousand population will contain from four hundred to six hundred families per square mile, whereas a typical agricultural community in a prosperous agricultural state will hardly average more than ten families per square mile. The farming class is isolated from other classes. Farmers, of course, mingle considerably in a business and political way with the men of their trading town and county seat; but, broadly speaking, farmers do not associate freely with people living under urban conditions and possessing other than the rural point of view. It would be venturesome to suggest very definite generalizations with respect to the precise influence of these conditions, because, so far as the writer is aware, the psychology of isolation has not been worked out. But two or three conclusions seem to be admissible, and for that matter rather generally accepted.

The well-known conservatism of the farming class is doubtless largely due to class isolation. Habits, ideas, traditions, and ideals have long life in the rural community. Changes come slowly. There is a tendency to tread the well-worn paths. The farmer does not easily keep in touch with rapid modern development, unless the movements or methods directly affect him. Physical agencies which improve social conditions, such as electric lights, telephones, and pavements, come to the city first. The atmosphere of the country speaks peace and quiet. Nature's routine of sunshine and storm, of summer and winter, encourages routine and repetition in the man who works with her.

A complement of this rural conservatism, which at first thought seems a paradox, but which probably grows out of these same conditions of isolation, is the intense radicalism of a rural community when once it breaks away from its moorings. Many farmers are unduly suspicious of others' motives; yet the same people often succumb to the wiles of the charlatan, whether medical or political. Farmers are usually conservative in politics and intensely loyal to party; but the Populist movement indicates the tendency to extremes when the old allegiance is left behind. Old methods of farming may be found alongside ill-considered attempts to raise new crops or to utilize untried machines.

Other effects of rural isolation are seen in a class provincialism that is hard to eradicate, and in the development of minds less alert to seize business advantages and less far-sighted than are developed by the intense industrial life of the town. There is time to brood over wrongs, real and imaginary. Personal prejudices often grow to be rank and coarse-fibered. Neighborhood feuds are not uncommon and are often virulent. Leadership is made difficult and sometimes impossible. It is easy to fall into personal habits that may mark off the farmer from other classes of similar intelligence, and that bar him from his rightful social place.

It would, however, be distinctly unfair to the farm community if we did not emphasize some of the advantages that grow out of the rural mode of life. Farmers have time to think, and the typical American farmer is a man who has thought much and

often deeply. A spirit of sturdy independence is generated, and freedom of will and of action is encouraged. Family life is nowhere so educative as in the country. The whole family co-operates for common ends, and in its individual members are bred the qualities of industry, patience, and perseverance. The manual work of the schools is but a makeshift for the old-fashioned training of the country-grown boy. Country life is an admirable preparation for the modern industrial and professional career.

Nevertheless, rural isolation is a real evil. Present-day living is so distinctively social, progress is so dependent upon social agencies, social development is so rapid, that if the farmer is to keep his status he must be fully in step with the rest of the army. He must secure the social view-point. The disadvantages of rural isolation are largely in the realm of the social relations, its advantages mostly on the individual and moral side. Farm life makes a strong individual; it is a serious menace to the achievement of class power.

A cure for isolation sometimes suggested is the gathering of the farmers into villages. This remedy, however, is of doubtful value. In the first place, the scheme is not immediately practicable. About three and one-half billions of dollars are now invested in farm buildings, and it will require some motive more powerful than that inspired by academic logic to transfer, even gradually, this investment to village groups. Moreover, it is possible to dispute the desirability of the remedy. The farm village at best must be a mere hamlet. It can secure for the farmer very few of the urban advantages he may want, except that of permitting closer daily intercourse between families. And it is questionable if the petty society of such a village can compensate for the freedom and purity of rural family life now existing. It may even be asserted with some degree of positiveness that the small village, on the moral and intellectual sides, is distinctly inferior to the isolated farm home.

At the present time rural isolation in America is being overcome by the development of better means of communication among farmers who still live on their farms. So successful are

these means of communication proving that we cannot avoid the conclusion that herein lies the remedy. Improved wagon roads, the rural free mail delivery, the farm telephone, trolley lines through country districts, are bringing about a positive revolution in country living. They are curing the evils of isolation, without in the slightest degree robbing the farm of its manifest advantages for family life. The farmers are being welded into a more compact society. They are being nurtured to greater alertness of mind, to greater keenness of observation, and the foundations are being laid for vastly enlarged social activities. The problem now is to extend these advantages to every rural community—in itself a task of huge proportions. If this can be done and isolation can be reduced to a minimum, the solution of all the other rural social problems will become vastly easier.

FARMERS' ORGANIZATION

Organization is one of the pressing social problems that American farmers have to face. The importance of the question is intrinsic, because of the general social necessity for co-operation which characterizes modern life. Society is becoming consciously self-directive. The immediate phase of this growing self-direction lies in the attempts of various social groups to organize their powers for group advantage. And if, as seems probable, this group activity is to remain a dominant feature of social progress, even in a fairly coherent society, it is manifest that there will result more or less of competition among groups.

The farming class, if at all ambitious for group influence, can hardly avoid this tendency to organization. Farmers, indeed more than any other class, need to organize. Their isolation makes thorough organization especially imperative. And the argument for co-operation gains force from the fact that relatively the agricultural population is declining. In the old days farmers ruled because of mere mass. That is no longer possible. The naïve statement that "farmers must organize because other classes are organizing" is really good social philosophy.

In the group competition just referred to there is a tendency for class interests to be put above general social welfare. This

is a danger to be avoided in organization, not an argument against it. So the farmers' organization should be guarded, at this point, by adherence to the principle that organization must not only develop class power, but must be so directed as to permit the farmers to lend the full strength of their class to general social progress.

Organization thus becomes a test of class efficiency, and consequently a prerequisite for solving the farm problem. Can the farming class secure and maintain a fairly complete organization? Can it develop efficient leaders? Can it announce, in sound terms, its proposed group policy? Can it lend the group influence to genuine social progress? If so, the organization of farmers becomes a movement of pre-eminent importance.

Organization, moreover, is a powerful educational force. It arouses discussion of fundamental questions, diffuses knowledge, gives practice in public affairs, trains individuals in executive work, and, in fine, stimulates, as nothing else can, a class which is in special need of social incentive.

Organization is, however, difficult of accomplishment. While it would take us too far afield to discuss the history of farmers' organizations in America, we may briefly suggest some of the difficulties involved. For forty years the question has been a prominent one among the farmers, and these years have seen the rise and decline of several large associations. There have been apparently two great factors contributing to the downfall of these organizations. The first was a misapprehension, on the part of the farmers, of the feasibility of organizing themselves as a political phalanx; the second, a sentimental belief in the possibilities of business co-operation among farmers, more especially in lines outside their vocation. There is no place for class politics in America. There are some things legislation cannot cure. There are serious limitations to co-operative endeavor. It took many hard experiences for our farmers to learn these truths. But back of all lie some inherent difficulties, as, for instance, the number of people involved, their isolation, sectional interests, ingrained habits of independent action, of individual initiative, of suspicion of others' motives. There is often lack of perspective, and unwill-

ingness to invest in a procedure that does not promise immediate returns. The mere fact of failure has discredited the organization idea. There is lack of leadership; for the farm industry, while it often produces men of strong mind, keen perception, resolute will, does not, as a rule, develop executive capacity for large enterprises.

It is frequently asserted that farmers are the only class that has not organized. This is not strictly true. The difficulties enumerated are real difficulties and have seriously retarded farm organization. But if the progress made is not satisfactory, it is at least encouraging. On the purely business side, over five thousand co-operative societies among American farmers have been reported. In co-operative buying of supplies, co-operative selling of products, and co-operative insurance the volume of transactions reaches large figures. A host of societies of a purely educational nature exists among stock-breeders, fruit-growers, dairymen. It is true that no one general organization of farmers, embracing a large proportion of the class, has as yet been perfected. The nearest approach to it is the Grange, which, contrary to a popular notion, is in a prosperous condition, with a really large influence upon the social, financial, educational, and legislative interests of the farming class. It has had a steady growth during the past ten years, and is a quiet but powerful factor in rural progress. The Grange is perhaps too conservative in its administrative policy. It has not at least succeeded in converting to its fold the farmers of the great Mississippi Valley. But it has workable machinery, it disavows partisan politics and selfish class interests, and it subordinates financial benefits, while emphasizing educational and broadly political advantages. It seems fair to interpret the principles of the Grange as wholly in line with the premise of this paper, that the farmers need to preserve their status, politically, industrially, and socially, and that organization is one of the fundamental methods they must use. The Grange, therefore, deserves to succeed, and indeed is succeeding.

The field of agricultural organization is an extensive one. But if the farm problem is to be satisfactorily solved, the American farmers must first secure reasonably complete organization.

RURAL EDUCATION

It is hardly necessary to assert that the education of that portion of the American people who live upon the land involves a question of the greatest significance. The subject naturally divides itself into two phases, one of which may be designated as rural education proper, the other as agricultural education. Rural education has to do with the education of people, more especially of the young, who live under rural conditions; agricultural education aims to prepare men and women for the specific vocation of agriculture. The rural school typifies the first; the agricultural school, the second. Rural education is but a section of the general school question; agricultural education is a branch of technical training. These two phases of the education of the farm population meet at many points, they must work in harmony, and together they form a distinct educational problem.

The serious difficulties in the rural school question are perhaps three: first, to secure a modern school, in efficiency somewhat comparable to the town school, without unduly increasing the school tax; second, so to enrich the curriculum and so to expand the functions of the school that the school shall become a vital and coherent part of the community life, on the one hand translating the rural environment into terms of character and mental efficiency, and on the other hand serving perfectly as a stepping-stone to the city schools and to urban careers; third, to provide adequate high-school facilities in the rural community.

The centralization of district schools and the transportation of pupils will probably prove to be more nearly a solution of all these difficulties than will any other one scheme. The plan permits the payment of higher wages for teachers and ought to secure better instruction; it permits the employment of special teachers, as for nature-study or agriculture; it increases the efficiency of superintendence; it costs but little, if any, more than the district system; it leaves the school amid rural surroundings, while introducing into the schoolroom itself a larger volume, so to speak, of world-atmosphere; it contains possibilities for community service; it can easily be expanded into a high school of reputable grade.

There are two dangers, both somewhat grave, likely to arise from an urgent campaign for centralization. Even if the movement makes as great progress as could reasonably be expected, for a generation to come a large share, if not a major portion, of rural pupils will still be taught in the small, isolated, district school; there is danger that this district school may be neglected. Moreover, increased school machinery always invites undue reliance upon machine-like methods. Centralization permits, but does not guarantee, greater efficiency. A system like this one must be vitalized by constant and close touch with the life and needs and aspirations of the rural community itself.

Wherever centralization is not adopted, the consolidation of two or three schools—a modified form of centralization—may prove helpful. Where the district school still persists, there are one or two imperative requirements. Teachers must have considerably higher wages and longer tenure. There must be more efficient supervision. The state must assist in supporting the school, although only in part. The small schools must be correlated with some form of high school. The last point is of great importance because of the comparative absence in country communities of opportunity near at hand for *good* high-school training.

Agricultural education is distinctively technical, not in the restricted sense of mere technique, or even of applied science, but in the sense that it must be frankly vocational. It has to do with the preparation of men and women for the business of farming and for life in the rural community.

Agricultural education should begin in the primary school. In this school the point of view, however, should be broadly pedagogical rather than immediately vocational. Fortunately, the wise teaching of nature-study, the training of pupils to know and to love nature, the constant illustrations from the rural environment, the continual appeal to personal observation and experience, absolute loyalty to the farm point of view, are not only sound pedagogy, but form the best possible background for future vocational study. Whether we call this early work "nature-study" or call it "agriculture" matters less than that the funda-

mental principle be recognized. It must first of all *educate*. The greatest difficulty in introducing such work into the primary school is to secure properly equipped teachers.

Perhaps the most stupendous undertaking in agricultural education is the adequate development of secondary education in agriculture. The overwhelming majority of young people who secure any agricultural schooling whatever must get it in institutions that academically are of secondary grade. This is a huge task. If developed to supply existing needs, it will call for an enormous expenditure of money and for the most careful planning. From the teaching view-point it is a difficult problem. Modern agriculture is based upon the sciences; it will not do, therefore, to establish schools in the mere art of farming. But these agricultural high schools must deal with pupils who are comparatively immature, and who almost invariably have had no preparation in science. Nor should the courses at these schools be ultra-technical. They are to prepare men and women for life on the farm—men and women who are to lead in rural development, and who must get some inkling at least of the real farm question and its solution. The agricultural school, therefore, presents a problem of great difficulty.

A perennial question in agricultural education is: What is the function of the agricultural college? We have not time to trace the history of these colleges, nor to elaborate the various views relative to their mission. But let us for a moment discuss their proper function in the light of the proposition that the preservation of the farmers' status is the real farm problem; for the college can be justified only as it finds its place among the social agencies helpful in the solution of the farm question.

In so far as the agricultural college, through its experiment station or otherwise, is an organ of research, it should carry its investigations into the economic and sociological fields, as well as pursue experiments in soil fertility and animal nutrition.

In the teaching of students, the agricultural college will continue the important work of training men for agricultural research, agricultural teaching, and expert supervision of various agricultural enterprises. But the college should put renewed

emphasis upon its ability to send well-trained men to the farms, there to live their lives, there to find their careers, and there to lead in the movements for rural progress. A decade ago it was not easy to find colleges which believed that this could be done, and some agricultural educators have even disavowed such a purpose as a proper object of the colleges. But the strongest agricultural colleges today have pride in just such a purpose. And why not? We not only need men thus trained as leaders in every rural community, but if the farming business cannot be made to offer a career to a reasonable number of college-trained men, it is a sure sign that only by the most herculean efforts can the farmers maintain their status as a class. If agriculture must be turned over wholly to the untrained and to the half-trained, if it cannot satisfy the ambition of strong, well-educated men and women, its future, from the social point of view, is indeed gloomy.

The present-day course of study in the agricultural college does not, however, fully meet this demand for rural leadership. The farm problem has been regarded as a technical question, and a technical training has been offered the student. The agricultural college, therefore, needs "socializing." Agricultural economics and rural sociology should occupy a large place in the curriculum. The men who go from the college to the farm should appreciate the significance of the agricultural question, and should be trained to organize their forces for genuine rural progress. The college should, as far as possible, become the leader in the whole movement for solving the farm problem.

The farm home has not come in for its share of attention in existing schemes of agricultural education. The kitchen and the dining-room have as much to gain from science as have the dairy and the orchard. The inspiration of vocational knowledge must be the possession of her who is the entrepreneur of the family, the home-maker. The agricultural colleges through their departments of domestic science — better, of "home-making" — should inaugurate a comprehensive movement for carrying to the farm home a larger measure of the advantages which modern science is showering upon humanity.

The agricultural college must also lead in a more adequate

development of extension teaching. Magnificent work has already been done through farmers' institutes, reading courses, co-operative experiments, demonstrations, and correspondence. But the field is so immense, the number of people involved so enormous, the difficulties of reaching them so many, that it offers a genuine problem, and one of peculiar significance, not only because of the generally recognized need of adult education, but also because of the isolation of the farmers.

It should be said that in no line of rural betterment has so much progress been made in America as in agricultural education. Merely to describe the work that is being done through nature-study and agriculture in the public schools, through agricultural schools, through our magnificent agricultural colleges, through farmers' institutes, and especially through the experiment stations and the federal Department of Agriculture in agricultural research and in the distribution of the best agricultural information—merely to inventory these movements properly would take the time available for this discussion. What has been said relative to agricultural education is less in way of criticism of existing methods than in way of suggestion as to fundamental needs.

THE ETHICAL AND RELIGIOUS PROBLEM

Wide generalizations as to the exact moral situation in the rural community are impossible. Conditions have not been adequately studied. It is probably safe to say that the country environment is extremely favorable for pure family life, for temperance, and for bodily and mental health. To picture the country a paradise is, however, mere silliness. There are in the country, as elsewhere, evidences of vulgarity in language, of coarseness in thought, of social impurity, of dishonesty in business. There is room in the country for all the ethical teaching that can be given.

Nor is it easy to discuss the country church question. Conditions vary in different parts of the Union, and no careful study has been made of the problem. As a general proposition, it may be said that there are too many churches in the country, and that these are illy supported. Consequently, they have in many cases

inferior ministers. Sectarianism is probably more divisive than in the city, not only because of the natural conservatism of the people and a natural disinclination to change their views, but because sectarian quarrels are perhaps more easily fomented and less easily harmonized than anywhere else. Moreover, in the city a person can usually find a denomination to his liking. In the country, even with the present overchurched condition, this is difficult.

The ideal solution of the country church problem is to have in each rural community one strong church adequately supported, properly equipped, ministered to by an able man—a church which leads in community service. The path to the realization of such an ideal is rough and thorny. Church federation, however, promises large results in this direction and should be especially encouraged.

Whatever outward form the solution of the country church question may take, there seem to be several general principles involved in a satisfactory attempt to meet the issue. In the first place, the country church offers a problem by itself, socially considered. Methods successful in the city may not succeed in the country. The country church question must then be studied thoroughly and on the ground.

Again, the same principle of financial aid to be utilized in the case of the schools must be invoked here. The wealth of the whole church must contribute to the support of the church everywhere. The strong must help the weak. The city must help the country. But this aid must be given by co-operation, not by condescension. The demand cannot be met by home missionary effort nor by church-building contributions; the principle goes far deeper than that. Some device must be secured which binds together the whole church, along denominational lines if must be, for a full development of church work in every community in the land.

Furthermore, there is supreme necessity for adding dignity to the country parish. Too often at present the rural parish is regarded either as a convenient laboratory for the clerical novice, or as an asylum for the decrepit or inefficient. The country

parish must be a parish for our ablest and strongest. The ministry of the most christlike must be to the hill-towns of Galilee as well as to Jerusalem.

There is still another truth that the country church cannot afford to ignore. The rural church question is peculiarly interwoven with the industrial and social problems of the farm. A declining agriculture cannot foster a growing church. An active church can render especially strong service to a farm community, in its influence upon the religious life, the home life, the educational life, the social life, and even upon the industrial life. Nowhere else are these various phases of society's activities so fully members one of another as in the country. The country church should co-operate with other rural social agencies. This means that the country pastor should assume a certain leadership in movements for rural progress. He is splendidly fitted, by the nature of his work and by his position in the community, to co-operate with earnest farmers for the social and economic, as well as the moral and spiritual, upbuilding of the farm community. But he must know the farm problem. Here is an opportunity for theological seminaries: let them make rural sociology a required subject. And, better, here is a magnificent field of labor for the right kind of young men. The country pastorate may thus prove to be, as it ought to be, a place of honor and rare privilege. In any event, the country church, to render its proper service, not alone must minister to the individual soul, but must throw itself into the struggle for rural betterment, must help solve the farm problem.

FEDERATION OF FORCES

The suggestion that the country church should ally itself with other agencies of rural progress may be carried a step farther. Rural social forces should be federated. The object of such federation is to emphasize the real nature of the farm problem, to interest many people in its solution, and to secure the co-operation of the various rural social agencies, each of which has its sphere, but also its limitations. The method of federation is to bring together, for conference and for active work, farmers—especially representatives of farmers' organizations, agricultural

educators, rural school-teachers and supervisors, country clergymen, country editors; in fact, all who have a genuine interest in the farm problem. Thus will come clearer views of the questions at issue, broader plans for reform, greater incentive to action, and more rapid progress.

CONCLUSION

In this brief analysis of the social problems of American farmers it has been possible merely to outline those aspects of the subject that seem to be fundamental. It is hoped that the importance of each problem has been duly emphasized, that the wisest methods of progress have been indicated, and that the relation of the various social agencies to the main question has been clearly brought out. Let us leave the subject by emphasizing once more the character of the ultimate farm problem. This problem may be stated more concretely, if not more accurately, than was done at the opening of the paper, by saying that the ideal of rural betterment is to preserve upon our farms the typical American farmer. The American farmer has been essentially a middle-class man. It is this type we must maintain. Agriculture must be made to yield returns in wealth, in opportunity, in contentment, in social position, sufficient to attract and to hold to it a class of intelligent, educated American citizens. This is an end vital to the preservation of American democratic ideals. It is a result that will not achieve itself; social agencies must be invoked for its accomplishment. It demands the intelligent and earnest co-operation of all who love the soil and who seek America's permanent welfare.

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